

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2021

Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Center for Disease Control and Prevention
395 E St. SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Director Walensky:

We are writing to you concerned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) continued attempts to push one-size-fits-all vaccination incentives and transmission mitigation efforts, including recent mask guidance, in the United States.

We are aware many states are currently experiencing a significant increase in COVID-19 infections because of the transmissibility of the Delta variant. As Members of Congress, we are concerned by this case increase and support state led efforts to increase vaccinations and mitigate the spread. However, at this time we believe more stringent mask guidance will be ineffective and discourage vaccine uptake.

Throughout this pandemic, CDC leadership have treated Americans whose culture and ideological beliefs naturally lend to a distrust of government control with condescension and disrespect. This arrogant behavior and rhetoric demonstrate a fundamental lack of understanding and further underlines why our founders established a Federal system of government. State and local governments are best equipped to implement policies in a nation as large and as diverse as the United States. As we have seen in recent weeks, a top-down Federal approach to vaccine incentives does not work. Many Americans are rightfully wary of door-to-door schemes pushed by bureaucratic scientists who have spent the better part of the pandemic patronizing them for their beliefs. Your actions have not only contributed to the politicization of three effective vaccines developed by the Trump Administration, but they are also the primary driver of vaccine hesitancy in the United States.

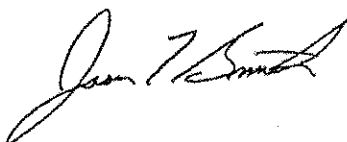
Furthermore, complete reversal of scientific recommendations understandably erode trust in future recommendations made by a scientific agency. The CDC has made several contradictory recommendations regarding the usefulness of masks in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Your most recent guidance has been issued despite definitive scientific evidence showing the vaccine is effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and for those breakthrough cases that do occur, hospitalization and death are almost completely prevented. In fact, the study used by the CDC was rejected in peer review and was based off data from a vaccine that is not approved in the United States. In other words, the decision was based off zero scientific evidence showing transmission among individuals who have received a U.S. approved vaccine. Your agency's arbitrary reversal of mask guidance for vaccinated individuals will result in further vaccine hesitancy because it falsely implies the available COVID-19 vaccines are not effective.

In terms of mask guidance for school-age children, we see no reason to belabor the point. The CDC has continually embarrassed itself and ignored the science in its pursuit of absolute control. We have encouraged our state and local school board officials to ignore this guidance due to its potential to significantly impair child development and create insurmountable burdens for American teachers. Furthermore, many of the undersigned sent the CDC a letter on April 21st outlining the scientific case against masking children. We requested a response to this letter by no later than May 5th. No reply has been received to date. Your agency has therefore ignored over thirty United States Senators and Representatives for nearly three months. This is a dereliction of duty and absence of leadership.

The decision to receive a COVID-19 vaccination is a personal decision that must be made by Americans in consultation with their physician. However, we acknowledge our responsibility as their representatives to assure them of the vaccine's safety, efficacy, and importance to public health. The rapid development of these vaccines by the Trump Administration will be remembered as one of the most remarkable medical achievements of our lifetime, and public uptake is the key to a nationwide resumption of economic activity and an end to ineffective lockdowns.

Going forward, we urge the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to allow state governments to leverage Federal funding to incentivize vaccination in the way that works best for them. Additionally, we encourage you to rescind all Federal mask guidance and leave these decisions to state and local governments. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your prompt reply, though your track record suggests we will not receive one.

Sincerely,



Jason Smith
United States Representative



Brian Mast
United States Representative



Ronny L. Jackson, M.D.
United States Representative



Ken Calvert
United States Representative



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
United States Representative



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
United States Representative



Tim Burchett
United States Representative



Ron Estes
United States Representative



Clay Higgins
United States Representative



Markwayne Mullin
United States Representative



Mariannette Miller-Meeks
United States Representative



Chuck Fleischmann
United States Representative



Mike Kelly
United States Representative



Barry Loudermilk
United States Representative



William Timmons
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Kelly Armstrong
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Kat Cammack
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Bob Gibbs
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Diana Harshbarger
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Scott Franklin
United States Representative



Vicky Hartzler
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